

## POPE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT O. S. B.



ONE of the first Benedictine monks who ascended the Papal throne, which he illustrated by his virtues, miracles and writings, was St. Gregory I, justly surnamed the Great, who succeeded Pelagus II, in the year 590 A. D. The 65th in the line of Roman Pontiffs, from St. Peter, he reigned 13 years; 6 months and 10 days. He was born at Rome about 540, and, after having been prætor of his native city, he embraced the religious life in the order of St. Benedict. In his monastery on the Cælian hill, he was so austere as to live only upon the vegetables sent him by his mother, and as he was incessantly occupied, in mental as well as manual toil, he brought himself to such a state that his health was ruined for the rest of his days, that he was unable to fast at all, and only obtained power to fast on one Easter eve by the prayers of a holy monk of Spoleto, as he tells us himself in his *DIALOGUES*.

St. Gregory was first and above all things, a monk. Even before the days of his secular greatness, when he was as yet but the promising scion of the most illustrious family at Rome, already known for the success with which he pursued the highest studies of the time, he had learnt from St. Sylvia, his mother, to pray devoutly before the picture of Our Blessed Lady, and his heart was full with the love of heavenly things. The brilliancy of his talents, his high position, and more than all, his MATURE SENSES, sound judgment and purity of life, pointed him out for the